

Amendments to the Specification

This listing of paragraphs will replace all prior paragraphs as follows:

Kindly replace the paragraph on page 24, line 3 with the following:

5. If the conference code **711** submitted by the VRU **705** is valid, the VRU **705** passes a message referencing the conference code **711** to a proxy server **715** requesting that the caller **700** be added to a conference. Those skilled in the art can construct the proxy server **715** to realize the functions described herein using, for example, a general-purpose personal computer (PC) running, e.g., an operating system such as any of the Windows™ family of operating systems, Linux™, or Unix™, or the like. The proxy server **715** can also run application software, including at least software relating to supporting Session Initiated Protocol (SIP)-based conferencing and/or telephony. Software suitable for these purposes is commercially available from, e.g., Vail Systems, Inc. (www.vailsys.com). The proxy server **715** maintains a list of all active interface servers **720a**, **720b**, and **720c** (referenced collectively as interface server **720**), and also tracks the loads currently being supported by each interface server **720**. The interface servers **720** function at least in part to support pipes or queues that contain requests to be acted upon by a conferencing database **725**. These pipes or queues can assume any type known to those skilled in the art, including but not limited to FIFO, LIFO, or other types. The interface servers **720** can be implemented to realize the functions described herein using general-purpose server hardware available from a variety of vendors. The proxy server **715** keeps running counts of pending message requests pending or awaiting on each interface server **720**. With this data, the proxy server **715** can perform load balancing across each of the various interface servers **720**. The conferencing database **725** can then select requests from various ones of the queues supported by the various interface servers **720** for action. The results of such action can be posted or stored in a results queue or other data structure.